BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Vicente Bargayo

"They have to send the clerk outside to meet the customers in the camp, because all divided into camps, eh. You got Spanish Camp, you got Filipino Camp, you got Korean Camp, then we got the Japanese Camp. So different clerks go out every day, every morning, to take orders and then deliver in the afternoon. That's our duty. . . . Better for me than working through rain and sunshine."

Born March 1, 1901 in Carcar, Cebu, Philippines, Vicente Bargayo was the oldest child of farmers Isaak and Juana Bargayo. Vicente first attended a Visayan school, then an American school. His ambition was to become a journalist, but he had to drop out of high school in 1921 upon his mother's death. Instead, Vicente became a teacher and taught for six years in schools near his hometown.

In 1929, Vicente immigrated to Hawai'i and went immediately to Kōloa Sugar Plantation. His first job was kālai, or weeding. After only three days on the job, Vicente became a Caterpillar helper.

In 1932, Vicente took a job as a clerk, order taker, and delivery person with Kōloa Plantation Store. His main area was Filipino Camp.

He moved to Līhue Store and worked in the warehouse from 1954 until his retirement in 1963.

Until his death in 1989, Vicente lived in Kōloa's Shinagawa Camp. His wife, Gregoria, died in 1988. They had nine children, twenty-seven grandchildren, and thirty-six great-grandchildren.

Vicente was active in the Kōloa Debating Club, Kōloa Filipino Community Club, and the Kōloa Federal Credit Union. He also was a talented writer. Three of his essays appear at the end of the interview.

Tape No. 15-41-1-87

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Vicente Bargayo (VB)

June 4, 1987

Kōloa, Kaua'i

BY: Chris Planas (CP)

CP: This is an interview with Vicente Bargayo on June 4, 1987 at his home in Kōloa. The interviewer is Chris Planas.

Okay, maybe the first thing we can ask you is when you were born.

VB: March 1, 1901.

CP: Nineteen one. And where were you born at?

VB: Carcar, Cebu, Philippines.

CP: And do you remember your parents' names?

VB: Yeah. My father is Isaak Bargayo. And then my mother is Juana Navarro [Bargayo].

CP: And both your parents are Visayan, yeah?

VB: Visayan, yes.

CP: How about your brothers and sisters, do you remember them? How many brothers and how many sisters you had?

VB: Oh. I have one sister and three brothers.

CP: Okay, and where were you? You were oldest or youngest . . .

VB: I'm the oldest.

CP: Oh, I see.

VB: All of them died already. Only me living now.

CP: You are the only one that come to the United States?

VB: Only me (in my family) and four others from my town. But I order them [i.e., VB's wife and children] in 1932, eh. My family joined

me (in Hawai'i on October 11, 1933).

CP: What did your parents do in the Philippines? What kind of work did your parents do?

VB: Well, farming.

CP: Farming?

VB: Uh huh [yes]. My mother (was) a business(woman), my father is a farmer.

CP: Oh, what kind of business did your mother have?

VB: Selling corn from town to town. Corn, when we harvest, eh. Yeah, that is the business.

CP: Oh, so you guys grew corn on your farm?

VB: Corn.

CP: What other kinds of things did you grow?

VB: Millet and rice. (Vegetables and coconuts.)

CP: And did you own your own land?

VB: Yeah, before when my father and my grandfather were living, we owned the land. After he [father] died, we sell, because us, we are small, yet, go school. My mother no stay home because she's in business. So no can attend her land already.

CP: Oh, I see. So did you sell the land before you came to Hawai'i?

VB: Yes.

CP: And then what did you do after the land was sold?

VB: Oh, I teach (in the English public school), yeah. Eight years, I think.

CP: Oh, that's right, you're a teacher.

VB: Yeah. Eight years in public school teacher.

CP: Oh. What kind of education did you have? Did you go to high school?

VB: I was a third year attainment.

CP: Third year of high school?

VB: Third year high school.

CP: Oh, okay, so actually, you went to school for a long time, then? Grade school and high school.

VB: Yeah.

CP: And then when did you---how old were you when you started teaching?

VB: Twenty-one years.

CP: And then you teached for eight years?

VB: Eight years.

CP: So you were twenty-nine, then, when you came over here [on June 6, 1929]?

VB: Twenty-nine, uh huh [yes].

CP: In your town, you're from Carcar, yeah?

VB: Yeah.

CP: Other people, mostly other people were farmers, too?

VB: Yeah, mostly farmers. (Fishing and carpentry.)

CP: Same . . .

VB: Same. Plant rice, corn and coconuts. And bananas, too.

CP: Do you remember the house that you lived in? What kind house?

VB: Oh, yeah, ordinary house. Filipino house. Grass shack. (Laughs)

CP: Oh, with grass, and the roof, like that?

VB: Yeah, yeah. [VB's house was made of bamboo with a little bit of lumber, while the roof was made of leaves taken from palms growing in the swamps.]

CP: Everybody else had that same kind, too, yeah?

VB: Mostly, mostly. But some got galvanized roofing and the concrete wall.

CP: Oh. Did you have any livestock?

VB: Livestock before. Yeah, we got goat, pigs and chicken.

CP: How about transportation? You guys---no more cars, yeah, over there?

VB: No more, no more. We have to walk. [When] we go to the mountains,

we harvest our corn and vegetables and root plants, we have to walk. And carry that around, put in the sack and carry home to the town.

CP: So actually, the land you farmed was away from your house?

VB: Oh, no. Away from my house is grandparents' land. At my house is our own land.

CP: Oh, I see. So you harvest on your grandparents' land?

VB: Yeah, yeah.

CP: But on your own land you only live?

VB: When my father was living yet, [he] was the one who till the land near our house, he was a farmer.

CP: Oh, so in other words, you had to [help] farm your father's land, then you [help] farm your grandparents' land, also?

VB: Yeah.

CP: So your father takes care of your land, then you or the children, you go and [help] harvest the grandparents' land?

VB: We go, yeah.

CP: Do you remember your grandparents?

VB: Yeah. My grandfather was Nicasio Bargayo. My grandmother is Sisaria Barga.

CP: Sisaria?

VB: Uh huh [yes]. Sisaria Barga.

CP: Oh, kind of close to your name, eh? Kind of similar?

VB: Yeah, similar, only a little bit different.

CP: Did everybody in your village go to school like you?

VB: Mostly, mostly. We are not illiterate. All people go school. Same age, eh. Girls and boys.

CP: What kind of school did you guys go to? American school. . .

VB: American school.

CP: You had what kind teachers? Filipino or Haole teachers?

VB: Filipino teachers and our superintendent is Haole. Supervisor is Filipino. Only the superintendent Haole.

CP: Do you remember like how many students would go to this school?

VB: In our graduation year, in 1919, we are in the seventh grade, 202 students.

CP: Oh, wow. Altogether, or each?

VB: Two hundred two in the two sections.

CP: Oh. Wow. That's a lot of students. So big school then.

VB: Yeah. I [visited the Philippines] in 1969 for the fifty years [reunion], that's fiftieth jubilee in that intermediate school. I was a valedictorian, they chose me. They were happy that I (was the highest in the class, and I was happy too, and my mother also).

CP: Oh, you were valedictorian?

VB: Yeah. In the intermediate school (87 percent general average).

CP: So ever since you were about maybe five or six you started going to school?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: How old do you---you go kindergarten, first grade?

VB: (No.) When I was small, I was going Visayan school, Filipino school, not English. After three years in the Visayan local school I went to English school.

CP: Oh, how old were you then?

VB: I went school I think, I started. . . . First grade I think I was seven years old.

CP: Oh, I see, and that was when you went to the English school?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: So mostly the time growing up, you go school during the day. And then after school what do you do?

VB: We leave home seven o'clock in the morning, and then recess ten o'clock, and go home eleven thirty. And come back two o'clock in the afternoon, and then five o'clock, go home again. That was the style before, Philippine style.

CP: Oh, so when you go recess, you go home?

VB: No. We buy something to eat like crackers, like that, sweet food. Then go back again after thirty minutes.

CP: And then you have break for lunch, yeah?

VB: Lunch.

CP: Eleven thirty you go . . .

VB: You go home for lunch. We no bring food in school.

CP: Oh, so you go home for lunch and then you go back at two?

VB: Two o'clock.

CP: Oh, I see. When you went home for lunch---what else did you do?

VB: Yeah, eat and then relax for a while.

CP: Then you go back . . .

VB: One hour sleep. (Laughs)

CP: Oh, you take a nap?

VB: Take nap. (Laughs)

CP: Then you go back . . .

VB: Back school.

CP: Then at five o'clock, you come home?

VB: Come home.

CP: And then get ready for dinner, like that?

VB: Yeah. We grind ourselves for eat because my mother no stay. We grind corn, we cook ourselves. We feed our chicken, our hogs, and our goats. We had plenty before, when I was in school.

CP: So you had to take care of the animals, then, when you come home?

VB: Uh huh, uh huh [yes].

CP: Then what time did your parents come home after that?

VB: Oh after---when my mother was in her business selling corn, from Carcar, [she] go [to] San Fernando, our next town. [Then] Talisay, Naga, they sell over there. And then Mombaling [a district in Cebu City] and then Cebu City. After three days or four days, (she) comes back home.

CP: And when she went traveling like that, she walked?

VB: (Rides) train, the locomotive.

CP: Oh, she caught the train.

VB: Yeah, we have train. That train was built in 1907, eh.

CP: The train was near your town?

VB: Oh, yeah. That's my barrio, my district. That train was there.

CP: Oh, I see. So how old were you when you stopped going to school?

VB: Oh, when my mother died, 1921. I was promoted to third year already, but I no can finish, eh. No more nobody supporting me, so I apply for teacher. And so I was received, I was eligible. So I started teaching in 1922, up to 1929 when I come to Hawai'i.

CP: Then when did you get married, when did you meet your wife?

VB: In Carcar, same place. We married, 1923.

CP: Oh. So you were---how old were you then? You were twenty-two.

VB: Yeah.

CP: And then how old was your wife?

VB: Wife was twenty.

CP: And what was her name?

VB: Gregoria.

CP: Gregoria. Last name?

VB: Last name, her maiden name was Ybanez.

CP: So you got married in 1923 and then did you have children in the Philippines?

VB: Yeah. When married 1923, my first daughter, who is in 'Aiea now, was born in October 24, 1923. Hard time, that year.

CP: And then you continued working as teacher, yeah? What did your wife do? Just stay. . . . Housewife?

VB: Stay home, housewife. Taking care of us, feeding us.

CP: Where did you live then, you lived in your same father's house, or did you have your own house?

VB: Our own house. Our own house since my father died. [In a later conversation, VB explained that after his father died, the house was owned by his grandfather. The house was worth 150 pesos, but VB's grandfather accumulated debts totalling that amount because of his

betting on chicken fights. The money to pay these debts was borrowed from their landlord, who evicted them when VB's grandfather borrowed as much money as the house was worth.]

CP: Oh, I see. So your father died first?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: Oh. How old were you when he died?

VB: I was seven years old.

CP: Oh, he died young, yeah. And this is your daughter?

VB: This is my daughter in 'Aiea.

CP: This is your oldest daughter?

VB: Oldest daughter, Fely (Fedelina). Next year she would be sixty-five years old already. She going to get pension.

CP: When your mother died, you were how old?

VB: When I was twenty.

CP: What about your brothers and sisters?

VB: My brother went to Hawai'i 1923. Then he stayed there for three years, he come back 1925. And my sister was going school with me in the place where I taught, and 1921 I teach in another town, not Carcar. And in 1921 and '22, I bring my sister over there, continue school. She was sixth grade student.

CP: Oh, so you take her to the other town go school.

VB: Yeah, with me.

CP: You catch the train to go to the school all the time?

VB: We have a traveling truck. When you go home weekend, like I visit Carcar from Oslob where I teach.

CP: What was the name of the place where you teach?

VB: Oslob, Cebu. And it is two years stay there.

CP: Oh, so then you stay there for the whole week and teach.

VB: Oh, all week. Sometimes, because no more transportation, I cannot go home Carcar (weekly).

CP: Oh, I see. When you teach there, where did you stay?

VB: Oh, we rented one house near the school. Teachers, we are four from Carcar, we rented the same house.

CP: Oh, I see. And then when you got married, did you still do that? Or you'd just stay in Carcar?

VB: Oh, when I get married I stay in Carcar already. I told my supervising teacher, if there is a vacancy in Carcar, call me. So I would be glad to be there. So there was a vacancy, then I stay there in Carcar.

CP: So you stayed there until you came . . .

VB: Until I came Hawai'i. Nineteen twenty-(nine).

CP: How was it that you ended up coming to Hawai'i?

VB: (Laughs) I was notified by my principal teacher. Nowadays [because] there are so many graduates of normal school, teachers who has no more ten years experience would be out from your job from teaching. And [I] only [had] eight years, so I scared, I turned in my resignation and (applied to the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association) for coming to Hawai'i.

CP: Oh. Who did you talk to about coming to Hawai'i?

VB: The sugar planters' (agents).

CP: Oh, they come to your town and recruit?

VB: Yeah, yeah, agent, some agent, eh. Then I apply, then I pass, and I stay over here.

CP: Your brother, he went and come back already?

VB: Came back, uh huh [yes].

CP: And what did he say about Hawai'i?

VB: Oh, he said if you really can work, you work. But he was very dissatisfied with working in Kahuku Plantation, because [of the lack of] drainage, eh. He (must wear) good shoes wading in the water in the sugarcane.

CP: Drainage.

VB: Drainage. And then he got sick. His feet was too soft and was sick from the coldness of water. So he escaped from there, from Kahuku, then went Honolulu, he work in navy yard [at Pearl Harbor].

CP: Oh, so he worked navy yard, so he got off the plantation?

VB: Yeah, got off from plantation. After working navy yard for two and

a half years, he came back Philippines. He stayed three years in Hawai'i.

CP: So then you wanted to come work plantation in Hawai'i? You wanted to come?

VB: Yeah. I wanted to come work plantation.

CP: How long did you think you were going to stay?

VB: We were signing contract for three years. If you work for three years and you get enough money, then you can come home with free transportation. But how can we save money like that? No more savings, how can we go home? No save nothing. More better you stay for a while. So I [later] ordered my wife, 1933, and my children.

CP: Oh, I see. Do you remember the name of the boat that you came over on?

VB: Oh, yeah. President McKinley.

CP: President McKinley. And when did you arrive in Honolulu?

VB: I know I arrive June 6.

CP: June 6.

VB: Nineteen twenty-nine.

CP: And you went to---you were in Honolulu first?

VB: I stayed Honolulu six days. Then assigned to Kaua'i.

CP: Oh, I see. So after those six days, you came to Kōloa?

VB: Kōloa. I no move no more place, only Kōloa I work until I get my retirement.

CP: Did you know anything about Kaua'i before that?

VB: No, no.

CP: How many other Visayans came with you?

VB: Oh, there were 300 Ilocanos, I think in the boat, and about hundred something Visayans. Only one third, one third of the (numbers) of the Ilocanos.

CP: How did you guys communicate, Visayans and Ilocanos?

VB: We cannot communicate, we cannot understand in the Philippines.

CP: Oh, you cannot talk to each other at all?

VB: No. When I was a teacher, 1927, there was one Ilocano from Pangasinan, name of Lorenzo Mansano, that is our principal teacher. And that is the time we know the Ilocanos, because he was an Ilocano. He portrayed the trade change, eh. Visayan go Pangasinan and Ilocano goes to Carcar.

CP: Oh, exchange program.

VB: Exchange program.

CP: But you still didn't---couldn't learn Ilocano.

VB: We could not learn because we speak English (and our Visayan language).

CP: Oh, you speak English?

VB: We all---he cannot cultivate his Ilocano talk too because he was alone. He was alone teaching in our intermediate school. Was the only Ilocano, Lorenzo.

CP: So you couldn't talk to the Ilocanos at all then?

VB: Only here when I arrive in Hawai'i, I know.

CP: How come? How did you learn?

VB: Close contact with them every day. In store and in the camp.

CP: Some words in Visayan and Ilocano sound the same, but . . .

VB: Same, same, some.

CP: But then some have different meanings.

VB: Different meanings.

CP: So, did you think that your English helped you?

VB: Oh, yeah, help me very much in Hawai'i. My little eight years experience teaching help me very much over here.

CP: Oh, how come?

VB: Because when I was in school, first year and second year, and seventh grade, we have developed already reading club, yeah. We train our speech, our imagination, our English dialect, acquired from school, so we were trained already. I was applying my knowledge, little bit experience here in Hawai'i where we made debates in the plantation. We win three times with other Filipino groups from Philippines against the students in Hawai'i.

CP: Do you think it helped you communicate with your workers, too, or

your bosses like that?

VB: Oh, yeah, it help me very much. They don't want me to run away from this plantation. The bosses loved me very much because I always cooperated with them.

CP: Plus you can communicate to your other workers too, yeah? When you first moved to Kōloa, where did you live first?

VB: This is when I was assigned on June 10, until now, I never move anyplace.

CP: Oh, where in Kōloa did you live?

VB: Kōloa town [Filipino Camp].

CP: What kind of house did you have?

VB: Plantation house.

CP: And did you share with other people?

VB: Yeah.

CP: How many other people did you share with?

VB: About so many hundred Visayans and Ilocanos. We work in the plantation. Same living, same kind of house.

CP: But each house had how many people inside?

VB: About two, three, yeah. And unsanitary, yeah? No more good (facilities).

CP: You mean the bathroom was outside.

VB: Yeah, outside. And then no more (toilet nearby). The Ilocanos just piss outside early in the morning, outside the balcony. (Laughs) They are lazy to go to the toilet because toilet is dirty, too. Unsanitary.

CP: So you live in Kōloa town. Do you remember where, around where it was?

VB: You know by the Big Save Store over there? And then in front, little bit the other side, in front, we call that Filipino Camp, I was living there.

CP: Oh, you were living there?

VB: In Filipino Camp.

CP: And then you lived in one house with two or three other guys?

VB: Oh, yeah, yeah. We were living about three of us.

CP: Three. Okay. And then how long you stayed in that house?

VB: I stay until, the bank where they are now, there was a plantation house.

CP: Where the [First Hawaiian] Bank is?

VB: Uh huh [yes]. Bank now. We move over there. Then we went to [another house in] Filipino Camp.

CP: Oh, I see. First you lived across from Big Save?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: Then you moved to where the bank is?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: When did your wife come?

VB: Nineteen thirty three. November 21.

CP: And when she came, was that when you moved to the house by the bank?

VB: No. We were already [back] in Filipino Camp.

CP: You were already in Filipino Camp?

VB: Yeah, when she came.

CP: So then she moved into your house?

VB: Yeah.

CP: Then you were living in the house by yourself before then?

VB: We (were) three. Three singles.

CP: But then you tell the other two guys to . . .

VB: Two guys move to other place because I got family already. They have to separate from us.

CP: Oh, I see. Then you bring your wife and then your daughters.

VB: Yeah, three children. One died, eh. My second daughter died in Philippines, 1930. So when they came in 1933, three of them only came.

CP: Your wife and two children.

VB: My wife and three children. Cesar, Fedelina, and Conception.

CP: So how many children you have altogether?

VB: Eight.

CP: I'm getting confused, now. You wife came from Philippines in '33. And she brought with her . . .

VB: Three children.

CP: Three children. Okay, so she moved with you to Filipino Camp, yeah? And then so when she came was you, your wife and three children.

VB: Yeah.

CP: And then you had . . .

VB: Then [five] children were born [in Hawai'i]. The first was my daughter, Cora, was born in 1934, August 2, as I recall. And then my second was boy, Jesus Bargayo, was born in April 5, 1936. Then the third is Anito Bargayo, June 8, 1937. And then the fourth, Tony Bargayo, September 30, 1939. And then Marvin, the youngest was born on October 4, 1948.

CP: Oh, I see, so you have eight [living] altogether, yeah?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: Three born in Philippines, and five born in Hawai'i. Big family, then. Do you have plenty grandchildren?

VB: Plenty. (Laughs) Grandchildren is twenty-seven. And great-grandchildren, I think, thirty-eight.

CP: Oh, wow. Big family. So when your wife came, you stayed in the same place the whole time?

VB: No, when we come to Philippines after I get retired, I took my lump sum, and then I supposed to stay there for good. I like (live) there. I bring all my belongings to the Philippines. But she was real lonely over there for thinking of the kids, eh. So she no like stay there. So we come back [same year]. About five months and a half we stay Philippines. Nineteen sixty-nine.

CP: When you lived in Kōloa who were the neighbors? Were all Filipinos?

VB: Filipinos. All Filipinos.

CP: Because you live in Filipino Camp, all Filipinos. Ilocanos and Visayans?

VB: But two Japanese families with us, Filipino Camp.

CP: Were you one of the few Filipinos that have a family?

VB: Most Filipino get family, that came ahead of me, all family. Like [Andres] Labrador get family, yeah.

CP: What kind of stuff did they give you in your house? The toilet was outside or inside?

VB: Outside. Outside only. Was kind of ugly kind toilet. (Laughs) We called it ugly.

CP: Only one toilet for every house, or . . .

VB: One toilet for two or three people. For one family.

CP: So it was like a shack outside?

VB: Yeah, outside.

CP: And did you have to clean it or did the camp people clean it?

VB: Yeah, yeah. The camp people, old man go around and spray lime, like that, clean, but not until it very clean. Just pick up the rubbish, yeah, and throw. And then three workers go around the camp, pick up the can, the can for where your shit is piled up there, throw away. That's their job to clean the toilet. Box toilet like that.

CP: How about bathtub or shower? Did you have bathtub or shower in your house?

VB: No, no, no more shower. One tub, big tub, make hot water there, then go bath after we work.

CP: Inside the house?

VB: No more, no.

CP: Oh, outside? So you had a big tub. What kind? What was that made out of?

VB: Metal tub. Yeah, we made hot water, then <u>bumbai</u> mix up with cold.

CP: Oh, you boil the water first?

VB: Boil the water first.

CP: How you boiled the water, you boil it under the tub?

VB: Yeah.

CP: Make fire underneath the tub?

VB: Fire, fire, yeah. The plantation supplied us fuel for make fire

every day. About three or four of them supplies us, going around every day. Only fuel they give us until it is exhausted already.

CP: And then you build a fire under the tub to take a bath? And you put cold water inside?

VB: Uh huh, uh huh [yes].

CP: What other things did the plantation supply you with?

VB: Kerosene, the fuel. Water is [also] free.

CP: Water is free. Your house had running water?

VB: Yeah.

CP: Every house had water, yeah? How about, they give you anything like paper goods or wood or anything like that? Firewood?

VB: Yeah, yeah, firewood he supplies us.

CP: Any food?

VB: Food, no. We have to buy food.

CP: Did other camps have better house, better facilities than you?

VB: Some. Some section got better house.

CP: Like which one?

VB: In the Filipino Camp, by Spanish Camp, too, almost the same. No more such kind bigger form of the houses, all same. You know plantation house, they are built only for the same kind look, same look, same situation. Same facilities.

CP: But the Japanese camps never had better stuff where the . . .

VB: Oh, I think they get better stuff than the Filipino stuff because they were the old, first, yeah, in Hawai'i. [The Japanese began arriving in Hawai'i before the Filipinos did.]

CP: Did they have better bathing facilities or better bathrooms than you?

VB: Yeah, I think. Because they have own their homes now.

CP: Do you remember the different kinds of holidays or celebrations?

VB: Yeah, we have Commonwealth Day, Rizal Day, and Independence Day.

CP: When is Commonwealth Day?

VB: Commonwealth Day, Philippine Commonwealth before we get our independence. And then every year we get Rizal Day, we got floats, parade, speeches.

CP: What is the date of Commonwealth Day?

VB: Commonwealth Day was sometime in August, I think, I cannot remember, now, I forget already. Rizal Day is December 30. Independence Day, we celebrate the Haole Independence Day, eh.

CP: July 4.

VB: July 4, yeah.

CP: And do you remember what you guys did on July 4?

VB: July 4 we celebrate with a parade, speeches, then our bosses in the plantation give us cow to kill. Good fun, good fun. Make big program at the park after the parade. That's what they like.

CP: Do you remember riding the train?

VB: Yeah, riding the train. The train is supplied to go to the [Po'ipū] Beach and play and take a bath over there.

CP: Oh, I see. Who supplied you that?

VB: Plantation.

CP: Plantation. Everybody climb on the train and go . . .

VB: Yeah. And go ride. (Laughs)

CP: Good fun, eh?

VB: Good fun.

CP: And you'd take your family, too?

VB: Yeah, with family, make games over there, volleyball, softball, running, track, by the beach. Because no more houses, you see, before all forest. All jungle before. Only little bit playing [area] near the beach water. Now, [there are] houses, big difference.

CP: How about Rizal Day? What did you guys do on Rizal Day?

VB: Celebrate his da kine.

CP: That's the day before New Year's Eve, yeah?

VB: Yeah. He's our national hero, eh [Jose Rizal].

CP: Right. And what kind of things did you do on the plantation to celebrate Rizal Day?

VB: We have program, we have floats, parades.

CP: Where did you have the program at?

VB: Program is special in Kōloa, centered in Kōloa. Some floats from Līhu'e come to Kōloa, and some floats from Kekaha, 'Ele'ele, and Makaweli come to Kōloa, because the boss over here like the program, the celebration, the Filipinos' celebration. So he give us cow, eat.

CP: Which boss was that? What was his name?

VB: Boss? John T. Moir.

CP: Oh, John Moir.

VB: Yeah, then the brother [Hector Moir], too, eh. Come after him [in 1933].

CP: And he used to like having the celebration in Kōloa, yeah?

VB: Yeah, yeah. He used to sit down with us, he used to hold speeches.

CP: Where was the programs held? Outside or inside?

VB: Behind [where] the post office [is] now. That big park before. That's the program over there.

CP: And had music and dancing, like that?

VB: Yeah, orchestra, dancing.

CP: What kind of orchestra played?

VB: String band.

CP: String band. Filipino orchestra?

VB: Filipino, because mostly Filipino music.

CP: Was that the Black and White Orchestra?

VB: Yeah, it was born in 1934 in Hawai'i.

CP: The Black and White Orchestra?

VB: Black and White Orchestra. The manager is still living yet.

CP: Oh, yeah?

VB: Yeah. The original thirteen, some died.

CP: Who was the leader?

VB: Pedro Aceron.

CP: Where does he live now?

VB: He stay in Lāwa'i.

CP: Oh, I see. Yeah. I talked to Mr. [Benigno] Tapucol. And he played, eh? He was bass.

VB: He was a member, Tapucol.

CP: Of Black and White Orchestra?

VB: No, not Black and White, some [other] orchestra. They were music in Kōloa before, the Visayan orchestra. Ligaya Orchestra.

CP: And do you remember had the social boxes?

VB: Yeah, social boxes.

CP: They had those, too, in those times?

VB: That is important feature in holy days, Filipino social box.

CP: How come?

VB: That's the only way we can get good fun, dancing, eating and raise money.

CP: Oh. Raise money?

VB: For the organization, plantation organization. We have Filipino organization.

CP: Oh, what was the name of it?

VB: Kōloa Filipino Community Club.

CP: And how did you raise money for that?

VB: Oh, selling boxes. Sometime they put something to eat, chicken in box, and they bid for high price, eh. Then the profit, there is a partition, one for the parents who own the box and the rest for the club.

CP: Oh, I see. So when somebody buys---they bid on the boxes, some girl has a box, right?

VB: Yeah, yeah.

CP: And then the guys bid, everybody bid. And then the highest bidder, what?

VB: Wants to own the box. If the highest bid is $100, even [if there is only] $5 (worth inside the box), he has to pay. (Laughs)

CP: Oh, I see. And then what happens, he gets to dance with the girl, too?

VB: Yeah, dance with him, too, and [s]he eat with him, all that, and then . . .

CP: Oh, I see, so just like he wins a date with her?

VB: Yeah. But usually nighttime, that one.

CP: Oh, that's interesting. And you said you were on a debating club, yeah?

VB: Debating club.

CP: When did that start?

VB: Nineteen thirty, 1931. Our debating club in Kōloa.

CP: You were one of the first members?

VB: I was one of the---there were six, three affirmative side, and three on the negative side.

CP: Oh, in Kōloa alone?

VB: Alone. Kōloa alone, some Filipinos from university, high school students from Philippines, and the high school students in Kaua'i, they are competing [with] us. Under the leadership of a [Rev. C. C.] and Mrs. Josefina Cortezan.

CP: Oh, Cortezan, yeah. She was the one who started the debate club?

VB: Yeah, the husband and wife.

CP: They used to try and help the local plantation workers speak English.

VB: Speak English. Yeah, that is one important aim, to familiarize the English dialect in Hawai'i.

CP: So they started the debating club? What was it called, Kōloa Debating Club, or . . .

VB: Ah, yeah, Kōloa Debating Club.

CP: And you, I guess she liked you?

VB: Oh, yeah, she give me special prize for my discussion the reasons why, eh.

CP: What kind of things did you debate?

VB: In Kōloa, the Rizal Day celebration, womans' suffrage not [being] allowed in the Philippines. . . .

CP: Oh, so you debate those kind, woman's suffrage . . .

VB: Will not be allowed in the Philippines. So we were on the negative side, [opposed to women's suffrage] so it's natural that the judges spoke to them because they were women. (Laughs) [VB later said that he did not choose which side he was to argue for.]

CP: Yeah. Did you win?

VB: They win.

CP: Oh.

VB: Yeah. I got special prize for myself only. And then they get excited.

CP: What other kinds of topics you debate?

VB: The last topic that we had, "Rizal Day must be celebrated every year." Yeah, that's one of our topics.

CP: Why, was it hard to celebrate Rizal Day before?

VB: Before hard, because no more too much childrens had before.

CP: How long were you on the debating club? How many years?

VB: About four years.

CP: And you said you guys used to win first place a lot, yeah.

VB: Yeah, first place. One time plantation and Kōloa Plantation, every plantation we win first place. [Later VB said that he competed in debates in Kōloa and in Līhu'e.]

CP: Oh. You go to other plantations and compete, too?

VB: Yeah, they call us, then we go.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

CP: You were saying that the managers used to---one manager contact the other manager to set up something. And then maybe you go travel to Kekaha Plantation, or Kapa'a?

VB: Uh huh [yes]. And there was no debating club in Kekaha, so we only attend the celebration on Rizal Day, Flag Day, like that.

CP: So I guess your English helped, yeah, for that?

VB: Oh, yeah.

CP: Okay, maybe I can ask you some things about what kind of work you did when you first came . . .

VB: First when I came, I got hoeing, three days.

CP: Hō hana?

VB: Kālai.

CP: Oh, kālai.

VB: Three days.

CP: Three days? And then . . .

VB: And then I applied [as a] tractor helper. Then after one day working as helper, I get an accident.

CP: Oh, what happened?

VB: The plow. The helper must sit down behind the tractor, eh. So we were harrowing, not level ground. When the driver was turning (the tractor), the plow (hit) my arm, so it goes underneath. I got seven stitches. (I was taken to the plantation hospital.)

CP: Oh, wow. Only one day after you started working?

VB: Yeah.

CP: So then you had to stop work for a while.

VB: For about thirty days I stayed home without any work because (my hand was swelling and was in pain).

CP: Oh, did they pay you for those days?

VB: No, only eleven dollar they pay me, after I got thirty days and still home. No more union before. No more nothing.

CP: Oh. You know when you first came, you said you were kālai, eh? Was it hard for you? Because you didn't used to, you were teacher, eh?

VB: Yeah, but must go, must work. Because our luna was also Filipino.

CP: Oh, who was your luna?

VB: [Mariano] "Quirino" Aquino.

CP: Oh, okay. So he make you guys work hard?

VB: Uh huh [yes]. That's my luna.

CP: But your hands no plant crop, eh?

VB: Yeah, yeah. Sometime we put glove, but the first day I work in here, we cannot afford to buy glove. All sore. Lucky only three days, kalai.

CP: So after you had the accident, what happened after that?

VB: Then I apply for store (job), 1932, and (the boss) take me in the store, I think on July 26. Then 1933, the boss, the big luna from the plantation, tell 'em, "If you like order your family you can now, because after '35, you cannot order your family free." So I asked the camp boss, [who was] Visayan. In Kōloa that's Gavino Kilantang. So he fix me up to apply to order my family. So they came. My wife free, the two [younger] children free, only half fare for my girl (eldest daughter Fedelina), here, who was (eleven) years old, half fare. [Later, VB said that HSPA regulations allowed for his wife and children under eleven years of age to travel to Hawai'i at no cost. Any child eleven years old or older had to pay half fare.]

CP: Oh. So not too bad. So you ordered them and they came in 1933?

VB: Yeah.

CP: What was your first job in the store?

VB: Take orders, deliver, that's [during] the time we had job in the store.

CP: When you got that job, why do you think they gave you the job?

VB: Because they have to send the clerk outside to meet the customers in the camp, because all divided into camps, eh. You got Spanish Camp, you got Filipino Camp, you got Korean Camp, then we got the Japanese Camp. So different clerks go out every day, every morning, to take orders and then deliver in the afternoon. That's our duty.

CP: Was it a better job than working the other kind job (in the field)?

VB: That's better. Better for me than working through rain and sunshine. Because without any raincoat, you cannot go work because raining Kōloa every time, eh. You have to bring your raincoat.

Because no more such [thing as] one day, three hour, two hours, you go home. Before, rain or shine you have to work until pau hana. Until four thirty (or) five o'clock in the afternoon.

CP: Do you think that having English helped you with that job?

VB: Yeah, I think so to me and the rest of our Filipinos here. Because Mr. John T. Moir liked the Filipinos that can speak English. "How can you get your independence if you no try to practice speak English. What you get experience in the Philippines, apply it here."

CP: Oh, he told you that?

VB: Yeah, they told me. I told other Filipinos, "Don't shut your mouth." I said, "Yes, yes, you get to voice your opinion, your reason." So we voice it, he like. The boss like us.

CP: So having English must help when you go to take orders, eh, because you talk to everybody, right?

VB: Yeah, yeah.

CP: What kind of customers you had, all different kinds?

VB: Different kinds. Filipino, Portuguese, Japanese. But mostly to me was Filipino Visayans in my section.

CP: Which section was that?

VB: Spanish Camp and Filipino Camp. Korean Camp.

CP: Did they assign you one certain place, and then you go?

VB: Yeah, yeah.

CP: How often you go visit one house?

VB: One section, one week. One section once a week.

CP: What time did you used to start work?

VB: From seven thirty.

CP: And you pau what time?

VB: Five o'clock.

CP: When you start work, what did you do first?

VB: Clean the store, wash the porch, then sweep the room first before you open.

CP: Was that a big store?

VB: Yeah. Something like this Big Save before.

CP: Oh, that big?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: And how many people, would you say, worked in the store with you?

VB: Plenty. Oh, about twenty, I think, of us in the store.

CP: How many of them were delivery people like you?

VB: About eight of us.

CP: And of the delivery people, had all kinds?

VB: Some assigned to the Japanese Camp, me in Filipino Camp, and Korean Camp, then Ilocano side with me [i.e., VB also solicited orders from Ilocano areas of the plantation]. And the Portuguese, one Portuguese working with us, he going in the Portuguese Camp and Haoles. He go to some Haole house.

CP: Oh, I see. After you cleaned the store, then what do you do?

VB: Open the store, wait for customers. Prepare the stuff, cut the meat display. Display all everything for the display because every afternoon we close and put [the meat] in the freezer, eh, each not sold that day. So we open again and put display again.

CP: Oh. What times did you close?

VB: Afternoon, five o'clock.

CP: Oh, so you open from seven-thirty until five o'clock?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: And then you not open at night?

VB: Nighttime, no, not open.

CP: But then people used to finish work, right, at five or six o'clock, right? And how can they buy stuff at the store?

VB: They go home [i.e., finish work] thirty minutes earlier, four thirty.

CP: And then they come to the store after work?

VB: Yeah, I think so. Even from jumping from the truck, (they) go store right away, because no more time, eh? They no take a bath yet, so

[after] they hapai kō, come in, all monkey face (black) already, stay inside the store. Because you know the hapai kō before? Burn the sugarcane, how black their faces.

CP: After you clean the store, when did you first go out to make your rounds?

VB: Oh, we go to the assigned section for take orders. And the rest wait at the store to wait for the customers to come, somebody to go inside, go in the store, eh [i.e., the walk-in customers]. The old Japanese, they are lazy to come, so I have to approach them and ask them what they like buy. We have a cheap sale also, that's why. Cheap sale, cheap stuff. Make sale. So they wanted only to buy cheap sale stuff so we had to tell them [about it].

CP: When you used to go out and take orders, how did you go? Did you walk?

VB: We get truck.

CP: Only one truck for you? Each person?

VB: Yeah.

CP: Oh, I see. So you can get in your truck and drive to take orders and then come back.

VB: From house to house, and come back. Then when you come back, you prepare your orders, too. Then in the afternoon, before two o'clock, you deliver. (Laughs)

CP: So if I order some rice in the morning, you would bring the rice in the afternoon?

VB: Yeah, yeah, in the afternoon.

CP: So you used to have to lift, to carry the stuff.

VB: Yeah, yeah, lift heavy stuff.

CP: When it was before the war, it was different, yeah, than during the war?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: During the war, what happened? You had different customers, or a lot of soldiers come in?

VB: Never have soldiers. Soldiers are only maneuvering on the practice [area] over here on the hills of this Kaua'i island. They no stay long time. They were told to---they were told they were assigned to Kwajalein right away and they went up like that. And to the islands in the Pacific Ocean.

CP: What kind of stuff did people used to buy?

VB: Rice, dry fish, meat, shrimps, pastries, and what we call that, bakalaw.

CP: Bakalaw.

VB: Uh huh [yes], dried fish, like that. And then meat, cow meat, pig meat, pork chop, like that. They were plenty before, too, like that. Island kind, eh?

CP: Did you have other stores around that you used to compete with?

VB: Yeah, we have. Like the Sueoka Store used to compete us.

CP: Oh, Sueoka?

VB: Uh huh [yes]. They used to compete the plantation store. And then small stores, too, owned by single individual.

CP: So did you used to try and put things on sale to compete with them?

VB: Yeah, yeah.

CP: Who was your boss at the store?

VB: Mr. (Homer Maxey).

CP: Haole?

VB: Yeah, Haole. That is our first boss.

CP: And you go to each house once a week, yeah?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: You drive a truck?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: And then after a while, I guess, everybody, they know you, they know who you are.

VB: Yeah, yeah, they know me. Sometime they go Kōloa Store, too, they see us, and buy some more stuff that they forget to order. So we have to sell to them. Because we stay in the store already.

CP: And how did you collect the money for that?

VB: The charge book. The service charge book.

CP: Did they use bangō number?

VB: No. With charge book. They are limited according to their (earnings) on the plantation. So they are limited [to] maybe twenty-five dollars every month. You cannot buy beyond that. Because you cannot pay all. You cannot meet balance. It's limited according to what category, what job you are in in the plantation.

CP: Right, right. But then otherwise they can buy if they have the cash?

VB: Oh, if they got the cash they can buy.

CP: Do you take the [charge] book out with you?

VB: Yeah, yeah, I take the book with me.

CP: Oh, I see. Since you worked at the store, did you have a ceiling also that you can charge?

VB: Yeah. Now before, we have a competition of the clerks in the store. Me Visayan, two Ilocanos, then the rule in the store make the ruling. Those who can sell more, they [get] bonus. If you have so many customers, then you want to take their orders. See, if you got plenty sales in that month, you get the bonus. Instead of thirty-two dollars a month regular, sometime have extra eight dollar, sometime seven dollar, in addition to the original thirty-two dollars.

CP: I think right now is a good time to stop, yeah? I'm going to ask a few more questions, then. Let's see, there was a strike, yeah, in 1946?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: What was it like for you, because you worked for the store, yeah? Did you storekeepers and the store workers strike also, or did you keep working?

VB: We strike because we were union men, ILWU [International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union]. We joined the ILWU before the strike.

CP: So you went on strike, too?

VB: We strike. And then the stores close. Nobody can work except the boys check up inside. Us must picket the line already.

CP: So where did you get your food from? The other stores?

VB: Other stores, outside stores not connected with plantation.

CP: Oh, I see. That was like '46, yeah? The strike?

VB: The big strike was 1946.

CP: You know during the war when there were soldiers coming in? Did the store do really good business?

VB: When the soldiers came in?

CP: Yeah.

VB: Soldiers came in 1941.

CP: Right. During the war, the soldiers---you know because there was a lot of military, did the store have good business?

VB: Not much.

CP: Oh yeah.

VB: Not much because they only depend upon their food was supplied already. They only come in here for maneuver practice, eh. Jungle, playing jungle.

CP: So what kind of stuff did they buy?

VB: Oh, sometime---oh, they buy drink because they buy liquor mostly.

CP: Oh. Maybe cigarettes, too. . . .

VB: Yeah, cigarettes, yeah. Liquor and cigarettes.

CP: So actually, you didn't make too much money off of those?

VB: No, not too much.

CP: Was there any particular times in the year when the store did good and not so good?

VB: (Plantation workers earned more during harvest time, and spent more at the store.)

CP: Oh, I see. After the strike, they merged with Grove Farm, Kōloa Plantation [in 1948]? Was there any changes in the store after that?

VB: Plenty changes.

CP: Oh, like what?

VB: Like different personnel was assigned to Grove Farm and the rest stayed back by the store in Kōloa.

CP: Oh, so you had different boss in the store?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: Who was your boss then?

VB: One Haole, [Charles] Senger. Then the next one is Mr. Cox. Howard Cox. Haole again.

CP: So plenty changes then after Grove Farm merger.

VB: Plenty changes. We were merged to Grove Farm, then [later] we merged to Līhu'e [i.e., Kōloa Store merged with Līhu'e Store].

CP: When you merged with Grove Farm you had different bosses, but they don't work out? Yeah? And then how did---did your job change?

VB: No, my job was not changed, same, same. The same as always. Deliver.

CP: It stayed the same. Then when the Līhu'e merger come, it change again?

VB: Changed again, I was working warehouse piling up the stuff.

CP: Oh, you were working in the warehouse?

VB: The warehouse.

CP: That was in 1950. . . .

VB: From 1954 to [1963].

CP: Now what did you do there?

VB: Every new stuff like rice, feed, barley, flour, [arrives] from the boat onto one big truck, must deliver to our store. So we have to unload, unload and then pile up. Regular piling stuff in the warehouse.

CP: Oh, where was the warehouse located? Right in the back of the store?

VB: Yeah, back where da kine, where the store is staying in now.

CP: Which one?

VB: Just like Līhu'e Store.

CP: Where Līhu'e Store is?

VB: Yeah. That one was new one already, eh, that one. We have a big warehouse there.

CP: Oh, so you used to work in Līhu'e, then?

VB: Yeah, Līhu'e.

CP: Oh, so you no work in Kōloa, then, from 1954.

VB: Yeah, I stay Līhu'e, Līhu'e Store.

CP: Oh, so how did you get there every day?

VB: My car. I buy car.

CP: You drive to work every morning?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: You go work in the Līhu'e warehouse all day and then you come home?

VB: Warehouse. Uh huh [yes].

CP: Did you manage the warehouse, too, or you just worked in the warehouse?

VB: Worked. We got about seven in that warehouse working under one luna.

CP: Who was that?

VB: Fujioka.

CP: Fujioka?

VB: Yeah, that's our big boss there in the warehouse.

CP: You don't remember his first name, yeah?

VB: Yeah, I forget already.

CP: Now what is this about the credit union? You joined credit union, or you . . .

VB: Yeah. I put money little bit, and then they appointed me as [chairman of the] credit committee. The credit committee is the committee to study the situation of the workers, whether they can borrow or no can borrow. So I have to study because I am the chairman of the credit committee. For about nine years, I think.

CP: When did that start?

VB: Nineteen fifty-five starting.

CP: And what was it called? What kind of credit union?

VB: Kōloa Federal Credit Union. Still living here now, still.

CP: Oh, I see. So as one of the officers, what was your duties?

VB: Me, I have to check up the book, the record there. Mostly Filipinos or any worker from the plantation, eh. So I must check up every time they borrow whether they can pay or not. That's my job to check up. If no can, they must ask for one co-maker so that they can borrow money. Co-maker of the loan that they like. If they like [borrow] $500, if they cannot stand to pay, they must look for one co-maker to witness with him that he borrow that much.

CP: Oh, I see. So get somebody to co-sign for him.

VB: Better they co-sign. Every time they borrow, borrow, eh.

CP: So you joined [1955] for nine years then?

VB: Uh huh [yes].

CP: Until [1964], like that. When did you retire? When you were working in the Līhu'e warehouse?

VB: Uh huh [yes]. I retired when I got sixty-two years old in March. I resigned the Līhu'e Plantation [Store] already.

CP: That was 1963?

VB: Nineteen sixty-three, I retired.

CP: And you were working in Līhu'e, still working warehouse at that time?

VB: Yeah.

CP: You still active in the credit union?

VB: No, no can, I retired already.

CP: When you retired, you were still living in Filipino Camp?

VB: Retired, no. We moved because after we withdrew our lump sum to visit Philippines, we have little bit money, about $4,000. We bring to the Philippines so that we can have our expenses there. We wanted to leave [Hawai'i] for good, but. . . .

CP: What year was that?

VB: Nineteen sixty-nine. But since my wife was very lonesome, we came back. We managed to save our extra money in the bank and then we manage to pay the home-bound trip. We pay back, we pay [with] our own money already. Because we were free when we go home. [As part of the contract agreement, HSPA provided laborers free passage back to the Philippines.]

CP: When you came back where did you live?

VB: Outside already because you cannot live in the plantation house. Because no more lump sum, no more money. We are through. Then you cannot live on the plantation, you have to rent outside.

CP: So where did you go, rent after that?

VB: We rented a house behind the Big Save now. Way down. We live over there until we move in here.

CP: Oh, so you lived in back of Big Save from 1969 until 1985, yeah? Then you moved to Shinagawa Camp.

VB: Yeah.

CP: Oh, I see. So you pay rent over here?

VB: Pay rent. Housing help us. County housing.

CP: What is your opinion of Kōloa's future?

VB: In what? In what category? Economic?

CP: Yeah.

VB: I think economic---Kōloa is very open arms. Hundred times ready as before in economic condition. Because we have tourists now, they love Kōloa, they own some homes over here already. They make some individual stores over there (Old Kōloa Town). So it's blooming, this old town before was nothing, only credit union was there. Now all stores, individual stores owned by some people from the Mainland.

CP: Just because of the business from the hotel and Po'ipū and like that.

VB: Yeah. Then all the rest here by the beach, all hotels already. Before was a fishing ground, catching fish over there. Plenty fish. [There were] no more houses (by the beach area).

CP: Did you used to go down there and fish, too, like that?

VB: No, my friend, (laughs) I have to go with them and then cook the fish and eat 'em there. Yeah (laughs).

CP: Oh, I see. Are you glad that you came to Hawa'i?

VB: Yeah, I am happy. Because I managed with (laughs) only my wife and children with me. If they was there [Philippines] during the war, I don't know where are they now. Maybe they died. Nineteen thirty-three, no more war yet, eh? So I order them. That's lucky.

CP: Do you think that you were treated, you know, you had a pretty fair life while you were living here? From the time you came until now?

VB: Yeah. In how many better times already? Plenty times. I was very poor in Philippines. We could hardly support my four children, and besides, after that year I would be disqualified from teaching already because I am not normal [school] graduate. I only third year attainment. So I volunteer myself. Secure money to pay the transportation from Manila to Honolulu, so we secure it, try. So four of us from that town went together, same place in Hawai'i.

CP: Oh, I see. I think we can stop here.

END OF INTERVIEW

The following three essays were written and presented to the community by Mr. Bargayo and are being included here as part of his oral history transcript. The first, written in commemoration of the seventh anniversary of Philippine independence from the United States, was delivered at a convention in Honolulu in 1953. The second was written in honor of the fifty-fifth anniversary of the death of Philippine national hero Dr. Jose Rizal, whom Mr. Bargayo greatly admired. This essay was delivered in 1954 on radio station KTOH in Lihu'e. Mr. Bargayo's mother was the inspiration for the third essay, delivered on Mother's Day, 1980, on radio station KAHU in Waipahu, O'ahu.

The essays appear almost exactly as they were written. The Center for Oral History wishes to thank Mr. Bargayo for allowing us to reprint them.

Filipinos, Home and Abroad Must Build Strong Filipino Nation

My fellow Filipino citizens, ladies and gentlemen:

My warmest aloha and greetings to you all. Tonight it is my greatest privilege to speak to you in behalf of the Filipinos residing in this community about the significant event in our life history in Hawai'i: the celebration of the Seventh anniversary of the establishment of the Philippine independence. Seven years ago tomorrow, on July 4, 1946, when the United States relinquished her sovereignty over the Philippines we, the Filipino people, assumed a unique situation of an independent nation, a life the Filipinos longed to enjoy. As citizens of our country it is our paramount duty to make her strong educationally, economically and politically.

Ever since the [end of] Spanish colonization and [the beginning of] American occupation in the year 1898, the Filipinos had been taught the ideals of freedom and democracy, and it is only through democracy our country can grow and live happily and peacefully. These were acquired by unbearable struggles and unlimited sacrifices of our trusted leaders and chosen public officials. The Filipino people have wisdom and talents enough to demonstrate and administer the frame-ups and build-ups of the new republic. We had been taught by the United States of America her civilization, and our government is endeavoring to set up a more democratic administration in the Far East. One question is raised before you today. Has the present Philippine government accomplished this purpose? In the Philippines today there are serious problems that need immediate solution: tenants and land problems; class distinction (that is, division between rich and poor); there is an unemployment situation causing hundreds of Filipinos to be unemployed; the monopoly of the Chinese merchants in Philippine trade and small business giving Filipinos little or no chance at all in business enterprise. This is now the right time for us to change the administration. This year is election year.

My fellow countrymen, here in the territory of Hawai'i we are also facing similar problems to build a strong Filipino nation. In the early days of Filipino settlement in this territory there was seemingly prevailing mistrust from some racial groups in spite of our little contribution to the economic life of Hawai'i. We were considered irresponsible people in sharing to conduct the affairs of the community. As years went by the Filipinos emerged triumphant in rendering services for their fellow men. We are now on the road to the building of a strong Filipino nation abroad so that the Americans, the Japanese, the Portuguese, the Chinese and the Hawaiians have shown their love and intimate regard for us. Hawai'i Filipinos have formed various clubs and civic organizations and always have taken part in community programs designed to foster racial cooperation. To you fellow Americans here in Hawai'i we have men and women of our blood of intellectual capabilities, American citizens of Filipino ancestry, young as they are, ready with stretching arms to help you to function in your duty and carry out your program. Aside from this I'm proud to say that the Filipinos are peace loving and law abiding people thinking not only for themselves but

respectful and considerate to others.

We can also build our country strong by looking forward to safeguard the security of our job in the plantation where we work. Filipinos, laboring class as we are, became members of labor organizations because labor unions have forged ahead in great strides. However, labor as a vital partner with capital in production has been long acknowledged and recognized in all progressive nations. That labor and capital is the backbone of a nation to become rich and prosperous is written in the history of all ages.

My pledge to you Filipinos is keep always and maintain that recognition and confidence in the industries in allocating the Filipino workers to the different job departments for the survival of our families and children yet to come.

And to you Americans, and other various racial groups, we have unquestionable hope and lasting faith in our little intelligence in rendering our service and assistance to you. We also ask of you substantial protection in the guidance to economic progress of the many thousands of our race who are building homes in this far distant land separated by vast ocean from the Philippines that we dearly love.

Thank you and Aloha and Mabuhay.

Dr. Jose Rizal

My dear Filipino friends and radio audience, in behalf of the Kaua'i Pilipinhong Tinabangay, the so-called Kaua'i Filipino Aid Club, it is my greatest pleasure and privilege to speak and bring message to you on this commemoration program honoring the fifty-fifth anniversary of the untimely and tragic death of our national hero and martyr, Dr. Jose Rizal. Few countries celebrate death anniversaries of their national heroes, but the Filipino people love to remember and immortalize the day when Dr. Jose Rizal died so that the young Filipinos, especially those American citizens of Filipino parentage, may know what Rizal was fighting for and why and what he died for. This program and any other celebration program is also dedicated to those of you who realize the great value of one's struggle and devotion to sacrifice for the betterment, for the progress and for the freedom of his country. Such is our intention; such is our attitude--to foster friendly relations, recognition and self-respect with various racial groups with whom we associate day by day.

When we celebrate this day, we remember the courage and fortitude, valor and ceaseless sacrifices, and even death itself that faded in darkness which resulted in the fight that was demonstrated during the Spanish Revolution by our heroes. Foremost among them was our nation's figure, Dr. Jose Rizal, who carried the banner of the Filipinos' oneness of purpose, that is to realize his dream to gain freedom for the Filipino people. It is to this day that we honor and pay tribute to venerate those worthy deeds and lofty ideals of Dr. Jose Rizal who had suffered shameful punishment and finally had given up his precious life without seeing the light in the horizon for the realization of his dream that the Philippines to come is the Philippines free forever.

Rizal has championed the cause of the Filipino people during the darkest hour of her struggle for freedom. He believed in the principles for which the Filipinos were fighting for in the last world war, side by side with the American soldiers, although he used the pen instead of the gun for weapon, blasting the enemy not with bombs of powder and iron but with explosives of appeal. He kindled the flames of Filipino nationalism; stirred the feelings of the Filipinos to assert themselves in the pursuit of the blessings of life, liberty and happiness to which we were entitled as any people on earth. But this appeal had been denied and ignored by the Spaniards until mother America came to our rescue.

My dear friends, when the Americans set foot on our soil we had been unprepared for self-government--a government Rizal revealed in his prediction. But the Filipinos, more enlightened than ever, inspired and more conscious, with renewed vigor, continued with unfaltering attempts to present the cause of Philippine independence before friendly and generous America thru diplomacy and mutual understanding. We continued, under the United States' guidance, to stride in educational endeavor and social and political advancement. With this marvelous progress in so short a time, I venture to say that if Rizal were living today, he would awaken the Filipinos to the eternal debt of gratitude we owe America for the tutorship in self-government and the democratic way of life we have received from her during this American-Filipino relations.

Mother, With All My Love

Mother, what a wonderful woman you are; what a beautiful being you might be! Our Lord had instituted and created you with all the attributes that I wish for. Your love is warm and tender. The deepening glow of your constant care and sacrifice, even back in my childhood days; the language the very first education that you taught me at home; and the molding of my infant character are always in my daily life. The environment that surrounded our humble home was my inspiration that led me to think what would I be as I grow.

These meant a lot to me. Your motherly and enduring advices in shaping my tender behavior right at the start are my precious gifts that I would like to dearly treasure in my heart.

Mother, since you had long been gone, in a flight of no return, I can't forget you. I'll still love you wherever I may be in light and darkness. There is nothing more pleasing to tell than love of mother. My only wish now that I'm growing old is that I pray that I should always be active, strong and healthy to serve fully my organization to which I belong (the Luvmi Club, Inc.).

To you hundreds of mothers who are listening to me now, allow me to bow my head in solemn respect and honor that you really deserve. I give you my love and affection on this Mother's Day.

KŌLOA: An Oral History of a Kaua'i Community

VOLUME I

Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SEPTEMBER 1988